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Preparation of the Clay and Moulding the Pots

The pot is shaped by hand with the use of wooden paddles, flat stones, and seashells; the potter's wheel is not used.[4] A grey-colored sandy clay is obtained in nearby hills by the potter of Datag. Originally she gave the owner of the land where she obtained her clay one pot for each batch of earth. This arrangement proved unsatisfactory so she now obtains clay from the field of a relative. After the clay is dug, a rag is tied in a simple knot and left near the pit. This is a precaution against "envious persons" who might utter disparaging words while passing the location, making the dug clay unsuitable for pottery. She told me that "Sometimes these 'envious people' put egg shells or even seashells inside the hole where I dig my clay, mixing them with the clay. Pots made with this clay will explode or crack when burned."[5]

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A supply of clay is brought back to the potter's house where she dampens it and removes any small pebbles

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[4] The potter's wheel is used in other regions of the Philippines. "A Pot Is Made." Manila, This Week: Sunday Magazine of the Manila Chronicle, VII, No. 27 (July 6, 1952), pp. 13-4, contains a series of pictures of pot making in La Union, an Ilocano province. The article states either a hand or foot rotated potter's wheel is used and that one woman can make a dollar's worth of pots a day.

[5] In describing the making of clay pots in Masbate Island, Solheim writes: "The old folks used to leave a little money (sanag--protection money) where they got the clay and a piece of red cloth so that the resulting pots would not crack when used for cooking. The informant...thought that if these gifts were not left, the spirits of the clay pots would be angry and cause the pots to break." Wilhelm G. Solheim, III, "Pottery Manufacturing in the Islands of